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Advancement of women

Letter dated 3 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a summary of the World Assembly for Women 2016, held in Tokyo on 13 and 14 December 2016 (see annex).

This was the third year the World Assembly for Women has been held. The Assembly is one of the efforts of the Japanese Government to realize a "society where women shine", which is a top priority of the Abe administration. The theme of the Assembly in 2016 was "WAW! for Action", since 2016 had been a year of action for Japan and the world. In the light of this, the goal of the Assembly in 2016 was for participants to discuss and learn about actions and lessons on promoting women's participation around the world and to further accelerate following actions.

We received many guests and participants, including three senior officials of the United Nations: Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme; Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund; and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

I would be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Koro **Bessho**
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Permanent Representative of Japan
to the United Nations

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Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 3 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Summary based on the proposals of participants of the World Assembly for Women, Tokyo 2016

Developing the capacity of women and promoting their participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)

Break away from negative stereotypes

Concrete proposals:

- Encourage girls' interest in STEM fields. Teachers and parents, especially mothers, play an important role.
- Promote the social value of STEM fields and their role in solving a variety of problems.

Promote interaction with role models and increase opportunities to learn about STEM fields

Concrete proposals:

- Encourage female scientists to teach students about their careers in STEM fields and provide other opportunities to interact with younger generations.
- Introduce the careers of women who play important roles in STEM fields through television programmes and other forms of media.
- Encourage female students as well as women to proactively design their career plans to create a gender-equal environment.

Increase cooperation and communication between public and private sectors

Concrete proposals:

- Have companies and organizations encourage and support women to build careers in STEM fields, leading to the empowerment of women in STEM fields.
- Publicize the need by human resources for women engaging in the STEM fields in the private sector and disseminate what women can do and how they can shine in the area.
- Collect and utilize data about the gender ratio in STEM and other fields.
- Consolidate systems to support all stages of women's careers, including the reinstatement of female employees who have previously left their jobs for pregnancy or other reasons.
- Consolidate systems and environments which enable people to take advantage of mentor programmes and other supporting tools, regardless of their affiliated organizations, for career development in the STEM fields.

Promote overall gender equality in society to enhance women's participation in STEM fields

Concrete proposals:

- Promote work-life management.

- Make efforts to dispel gender norms and unconscious bias in both the political and business sectors.
- Formulate policies that reflect a large range of the public voice.

Promoting women's leadership

Break down the stereotype of female leaders

Concrete proposals:

- Promote training at all levels to abolish the stereotype of female leaders.
- Encourage all members of society, especially male family members and friends/colleagues, to support female participation. Male leaders should recognize women's empowerment as a priority issue and reform accordingly.
- Ensure that children are treated equally at home regardless of their gender.
- Proactively promote the participation of women in both the public and private sectors.

Enrich systems to enhance women's leadership

Concrete proposals:

- Consider adopting new systems and affirmative taxation systems in order to increase the number of women leaders.
- Enhance childcare at offices and other facilities both in number and quality; it is particularly important to fully equip the facilities for part-time workers.
- Introduce a flextime system.
- Increase men's commitment to increasing women leaders and change awareness at the managerial level.
- Support female entrepreneurs by sending advisers, providing monetary support, renting workspace, etc.

Work-life management 2.0

Promote changing attitudes towards working and role-sharing

Concrete proposals:

- Encourage company leaders to raise awareness of the new ways of working and role-sharing; changing the mindset of their employees should be seen not only as a personal benefit but also as a successful business move.
- Incentivize evaluations of company management reforms to encourage flexible and diverse ways of working.
- Introduce new types of evaluations and commendations for company management to use to evaluate workplace attitude reform attempts.
- Proactively use mass media and mentors to dispel the traditional and stereotypical ideas of role-sharing at work, home and in society.
- Promote the potential positive effects of changing attitudes, including a new market geared towards men at home.

Develop and implement tools to achieve flexible working environments

Concrete proposals:

- Actively adopt flextime and reduced working hours.
- Use information and communications technology (ICT) to improve flexible working hours and work locations. Encourage leaders to promote the use of ICT (including by potentially introducing mandatory teleworking) and provide all essential equipment.
- Introduce new ways of working that are not determined by the traditional model in order to improve productivity and time management.

Promote data collection and accessibility to the relevant useful information

Concrete proposals:

- Gather useful information, such as the correlation between work hours and productivity and challenges to women's participation in the workplace, and utilize it to raise awareness and reform effectively.
- Promote network-building to share experience, efforts and information, such as policies and regulations and their impact on women's participation in society.
- Promote adopting appropriate numerical target and monitoring mechanisms.

Enable a working environment that supports life events

Concrete proposals:

- Enrich and facilitate access to childcare and nursing care services. Consider utilizing the retired generation and the neighbouring community.
- Enhance a supportive environment by providing recurring training which encourages women to return to their work and to continue their career development.
- Enrich the working environment and motivate men to participate in housework and childcare by promoting taking childcare leave and so on.

Women's well-being, especially improving sexual and reproductive health and rights

Advocacy, promotion and familiarization of reproductive health and rights

Concrete proposals:

- Recognize that women's economic empowerment is impossible unless women are healthy, and organize, promote and familiarize advocacy campaigns that deal with reproductive health and rights issues that women experience as lifelong issues.
- Improve health services and increase access to affordable, quality reproductive health services for women as they wish, acknowledging that reproductive health and rights are key to achieving universal health coverage.
- Recognize that, during humanitarian crises, women are at a higher risk of dying than men, formulate emergency response/disaster prevention programmes that consider risks unique to women and respond to the unique needs of women, such as reproductive health, when responding to crises. Include workplaces, leaders of local communities, organizations, teachers and

parents as sources for advocacy and awareness-raising, enabling individuals to learn how to understand their health conditions and make the best choices possible.

- Provide sexual education programmes from the youth perspective, and make them youth-oriented. By promoting sexual education programmes led by youth, young men and women can advocate among peers on their own issues.
- Utilize private sector resources and increase public-private partnerships to secure lifelong health.

Adopt a comprehensive approach for change

Concrete proposals:

- Change social norms themselves.
- Abolish sexually discriminatory laws and policies.
- Nominate (and praise) role models, agents and other individuals, especially men, who set an example of social change. Create a collaborative network of community organizations and establish common ground among stakeholders, including teachers and local community and religious leaders.
- Ensure that education targets both genders. Informal education, in the homes and communities, is equally as important as formal education.
- Include women's voices in all decision-making processes regarding reproductive health and rights.

Collecting and sharing data

Concrete proposals:

- Collect and share good practices of women's health policies.
- Recognize and deal with the lack of relevant data when promoting women's health.

Participation and empowerment of women in peace and security

Promote the participation of women in peacebuilding

Concrete proposals:

Promote the participation of women in decision-making.

- Increase the number of women at the decision-making level in peacekeeping forces, police, Parliament, etc., and promote a system with equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes.
- Increase gender advisers who have a strong influence on the decision-making of peacekeeping forces.
- Make and implement a national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and establish a mechanism for its monitoring and evaluation with accountability.
- Promote the participation of women in policymaking, especially in Parliament, and develop policy from women's perspectives.
- Promote policies and make plans that consider women and children by promoting women's participation in making and implementing recovery plans after a natural disaster.

Promote the participation of women in the field.

- Promote the participation of women, especially at the senior level, on the front line of peacekeeping operations, in order to contribute to decreasing the number of victims of sexual violence, and to providing better care for those victims.
- Increase the number of female doctors and police officers in the field and at camps in order to prevent and assist victims of gender-based violence.

Strengthen training

Concrete proposals:

- Strengthen training on women, peace and security for leaders and future leaders of major institutions, and promote top-down change.
- Provide education on women, peace and security and basic gender training at national defence universities, research institutes, national defence medical colleges, institutes for developing lawyers and judges and training institutes for administrative officials and for prospective public servants.
- Provide training to enhance the resilience of women in the community and help them prepare, mentally and physically, for how to act at the time of conflict and natural disaster.
- Train women as educators to spread disaster risk reduction education.

Strengthen efforts to address gender-based violence

Concrete proposals:

- Focus more on gender-based violence in conflict.
- Strengthen the collection of data on gender-based violence and best practices for addressing gender-based violence, and share them with male experts.
- Strengthen speedy and holistic systems to prevent and respond to gender-based violence by increasing the number of female experts such as doctors, nurses, police officers, counsellors and those in the legal professions (judges, public prosecutors and lawyers), etc.
- Use technology to effectively prevent gender-based violence.

Gender equality from a youth perspective: current situation and challenges

Concrete proposals:

- Young men and women, as future leaders, should contribute to creating a gender-equal society. Encourage other youth to join the cause.
- Recommend that governments abolish discriminatory laws based on gender and improve the legal frameworks for young women who are not protected by the current laws and systems.
- Recommend that governments develop a system to reflect the youth voice on policies and establish a forum for political dialog with youth.
- Propose to the Japanese Government that it lead gender equality in the world and in the field of international cooperation.

Innovation from local communities: towards a society where women "truly" shine

For women and men hoping to make local communities where women can live and work comfortably

Concrete proposals:

- Develop women's confidence and nurture self-esteem in order to overcome patriarchal authority and stereotypes based on age by encouraging them to take interest in new issues outside the daily routine and get experience, knowledge and techniques, and promote solidarity with others in the same situation.
- Find role models who have the courage to step forward and achieve their goals.
- Be the change maker, as innovation brings change not only to technological aspects but to social systems and social norms, and leads to self-improvement.

For local communities

Concrete proposals:

- Recognize that communities can be improved by accepting diversity. People coming from outside of the community could bring knowledge and resources to make a positive impact. People from outside of the community often find valuable local resources which are often neglected by people within the community.
- Establish systems to include the perspectives of women, young women and girls in the decision-making process.
- Analyse the data of large cities and local communities regarding women's participation, rural-urban migration, income, etc., and implement measures to address the diminishing population in local communities.